

(Independent Press)

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# Soil samples reveal asbestos, health impact is unknown

PASSAIC TOWNSHIP—No trace of asbestos was found in the Passaic River near the National Gypsum plant, but soil samples revealed less than 100 parts per million of the substance in ground behind the on, ex, according to a laboratory report presented to the Board of Health Monday night.

Joseph Dill, sanitary inspector, told the board that Townley Research and Consulting of North Plainfield, a state approved lab, had conducted the tests at a cost of \$170. The firm checked the river at three locations, and analyzed three samples of dirt from behind the plant.

Mr. Dill said a township president had called him and asked that the piles of land fill at the plant be checked for asbestos content.

Dill said he had the workers collect three samples of dirt from locations she had identified as containing asbestos. The soil samples were forwarded to the lab, and, in addition, Mr. Dill had Townley take water samples.

"There's no doubt that somewhere under there there's asbestos residue," said Mr. Dill. He said the asbestos was buried in fiber form. For many years, National Gypsum had manufactured asbestos shingles, the type used on many houses.

John Murray, board chairman, conceded that some

people may question if these tests really prove anything.

A research chemist, Dr. Murray said, "the Board of Health has shown good faith. If we receive a (signed) complaint we may have to go much further."

Dr. Murray continued, "if there is a complaint that we didn't check the right piles, then we will consider it (further action), if someone can show us where the so-called danger piles are located."

"There could be all kinds of piles up there," he added.

Board member Helen Clancy, who is also a member of the Township Committee, bluntly stated, "this is 90 per cent nonsense, and 10 per cent fact."

A company which manufactures pesticide spraying equipment, T.I.F.A., is currently seeking Planning Board approval to move into the old National Gypsum complex. Mrs. Clancy charged that neighbors of the plant were trying to block the application.

"They (the neighbors) want that plant removed, and tennis courts put up there. They will do anything to keep a legitimate viable out of the township."

According to Mrs. Clancy,

T.I.F.A. has promised to make certain that no asbestos residue seeps out into the neighborhood.

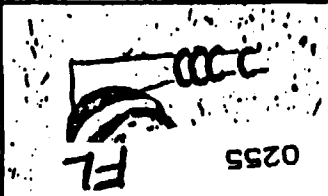
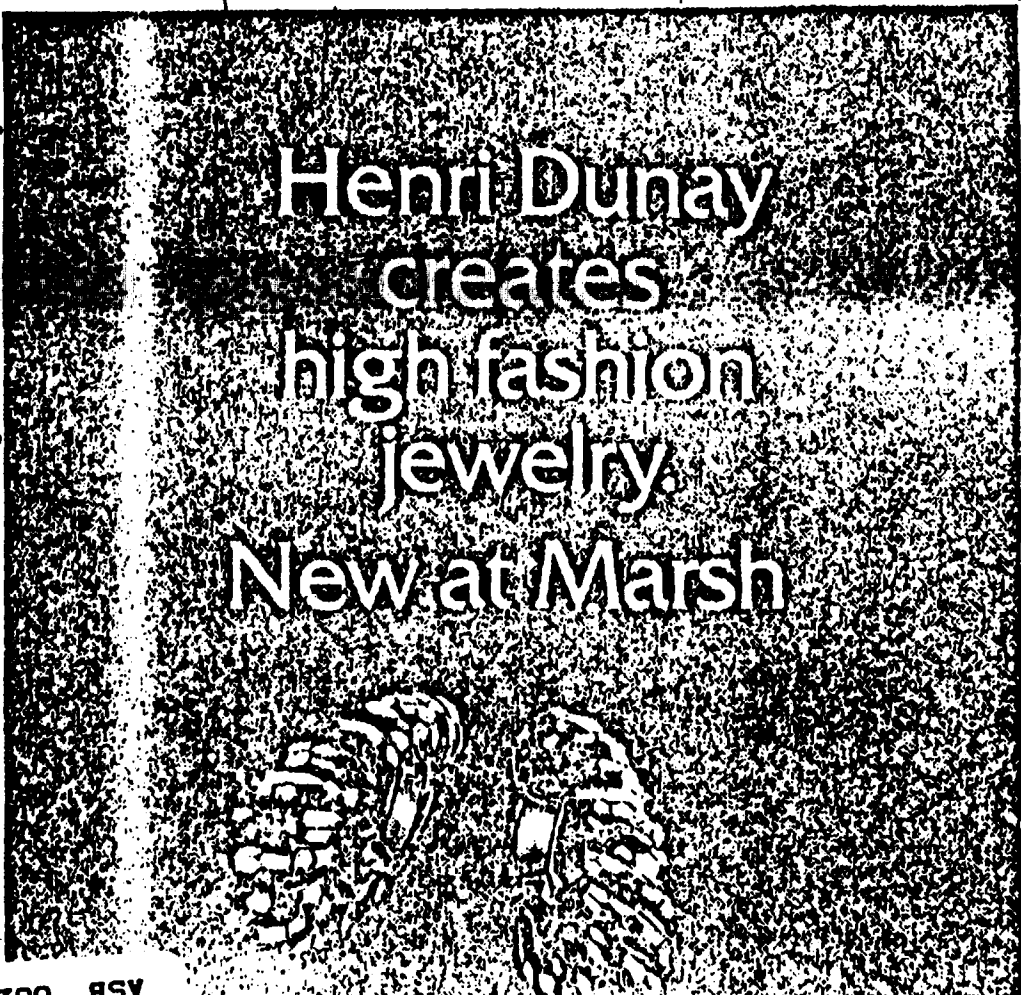
The question of what, if any, health hazard is posed

by less than 100 parts-per-million of asbestos in the soil at National Gypsum went unanswered Monday night.

Dr. Murray said the state Department of Environmental Protection

(DEP), or the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may have standards. The lab report simply stated its findings, and made no judgment on potential health hazards.

Less than 100 parts-per-million could range anywhere from one to 99. Dr. Murray explained that the lab instruments used for the tests probably couldn't detect a more precise figure.



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